

REMARKS

Support for the claims in the original specification can be found at least at the following passages:

The process and system of the invention provides a product that contains minimal amounts of harmful toxins, such as mycotoxins and benzpyrene, in the final end products, such as tobacco products. Tobacco leaves are particularly suited for the process and system of the invention. Tobacco strips, shredded tobacco, diced tobacco, tobacco rag, tobacco plant extracts, tobacco nicotine extracts, or any other tobacco-based product--all are considered within the scope of the invention. U.S. Pat. 6,637,438; col. 5, lines 50-58.

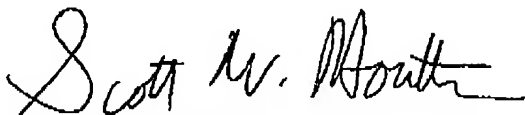
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Refer again to FIG. 1, which shows that a solvent 120 for removing toxins is contacted and agitated 130 with in-process product 100. Solvents considered particularly suitable for use in the subject invention include aqueous solutions having adjunct solvents added to facilitate separation of toxins such as acids, bases, oils, detergents, fatty acids, esters, emulsifiers; organic-based solvents, including ethers, ethanol, methanol, chloroform, dichloromethane; other alcohols, ammonia, bleaches, hydrogen peroxide, polyethyleneglycol, amines, methylamines, hydroxides of salts, formalin, ozone; or other solvents or solutions. Reagents that cause the toxins to separate as precipitates, as well as solvents that solubilize the toxins, are considered within the scope of the invention. Tobacco-processing solvents and solvents used to extract mycotoxins, such as aflatoxins, during processing regimens are numerous and, in many respects, the same. For example, alcohols may be used, in particular methanol and ethanol. Halogenated hydrocarbons, ethers, and other wetting agents may also be used. Liquid carbon dioxide may also be used as a solvent. Id. col. 8, lines 43-60.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would facilitate prosecution, kindly call Applicant's counsel at the telephone number below.

If additional fees are required, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to deposit account number 11-0853.

Respectfully submitted,



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